

REMARKS

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application. The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office action, and amended as necessary to more clearly and particularly describe the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

It should be noted that, in the present After Final amendment, the claims have been amended to clarify the subject matter of the present invention by incorporating features from the dependent claims into the independent claim. Since no new or previously unexamined features are presented, the amendment does not raise new issues requiring further consideration and/or search. Entry of the amendment and favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

THE REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-20 stand rejected under Section 112, second paragraph, as allegedly failing to set forth subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed, particularly as applied to the amended claims.

Claim 1 had been rejected as not positively reciting structure or function for the positioning device and orienting device, as recited on line 22-27. The Examiner states that the language has been interpreted as requiring that the positioning device and the orienting device be capable of performing the recites steps. Claim 9 had been rejected as not positively reciting structure or function for the orienting device,

as recited on line 2-3.

In response to these rejections, claims 1 and 9 have been amended to remove the language to which the Examiner has objected, and references to steps have been removed. With this amendment, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections have been overcome. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested. If these amendments are not deemed sufficient to overcome the rejections, the Examiner is kindly requested to suggest language that would be deemed acceptable.

THE INVENTION

It should be appreciated that the claimed invention, as recited in claim 1, includes a "positioning device" for positioning and retrieving "supporting elements," (preferably "roll stands) and an "orienting device" for transporting the positioning device and for changing the orientation of the positioning device. The positioning device transports the supporting elements along the primary paths (i.e. in the X-direction) separated from the orienting device, and is transported along the second path (i.e. in the Y-direction) while loaded on the orienting device. Also, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the "positioning device is movable forward with one of the supporting elements on its front side, relative to a direction of travel, and is movable backward with one of the supporting elements on its back side, relative to the direction of travel."

The present invention provides many advantages not realized by the prior art. For example, more than one supporting device can be stored along each primary

path, and these paths can be of any length without requiring more or larger equipment. Also, the positioning device can be any type of simple, commonly-available device, such as a fork lift truck, that can be used for lifting an orienting device. In this way, a system in accordance with the present invention can be implemented without a drive system, since only a few positioning devices (preferably only one) could be used to transport the supporting elements (i.e. roll stands) along these paths. The system of the present invention is simple in arrangement and therefore economically superior to prior art systems.

THE REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 2, 4-6, 9, 11, 14, 15, 17 and 20 had been rejected under Section 102(b) as being anticipated by Lehrieder et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,155,516). This rejection is respectfully traversed, particularly as applied to the amended claims.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claims 18 and 19, which had not been the subject of a rejection under Section 102(b). It is therefore respectfully submitted that amended claim 1 distinguishes over Lehrieder et al. for at least this reason. Based on the outstanding claim rejections, this reference cannot be construed as reciting "every aspect of the claimed invention" as is required in order to show anticipation under Section 102 (see MPEP 706.02). Reconsideration and withdrawal of these grounds of rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

THE REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-20 had been rejected under Section 103(b) as being unpatentable over Herrmann (U.S. Pat. No. 6,264,133) in view of Lehrieder et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The system disclosed by Herrmann is used to handle rolls of printed products. As shown at e.g. col. 5, lines 62 et seq., Herrmann includes a manipulator 1, which supports a traveling trolley 20, movable along a column 21, which is carried along by a supporting beam 22. With Herrmann, a large number of printed products are combined with a roll stand in a winding station and are separated from the roll stand in another winding station. The roll stands are either stored empty or combined with a large number of printed products. In any event, the device of Herrmann is very different from the present invention.

The Lehrieder et al. reference discloses a system for preparing, storing and supplying paper rolls to be used in a printing press. According to Lehrieder et al., the step of preparing comprises pushing paper rolls 11 into a transport car 16. The step of supplying comprises separating the paper roll from the first transport car. Between the steps of preparing and supplying, the roll is stored together with the transport car (see col. 1, lines 37-42). Therefore, the Lehrieder et al. system requires a number of transport cars that is at least as great as the number of stored rolls plus the number of positions to be supplied with the rolls. In the Lehrieder et al. system, the transport cars are transported along the paths corresponding to tracks 21, 32, 22, 34, 36, 37, 38, wherein an under-the-floor drag chain conveyor is used to move the transport cars (see col. 2, lines 39-42). The step of preparing also includes reorienting the rolls together with the transport cars by turning 90 degrees.

Between the steps of storing and supplying, the roll together with the transport car is transported in a perpendicular direction without reorientation of the roll and car.

With regard to the handling function, Lehrieder et al.'s transport car might be viewed as being similar in function to the roll stand according to Herrmann.

Therefore, if these systems could be somehow combinable, the result would naturally be a system according to Herrmann in which the roll stands would be equipped to travel along tracks in an X-direction, in which the tracks in the X-direction would be equipped with under-the-floor drag chain conveyors for driving the roll stands, in accordance with Lehrieder et al. Upon reaching the end of the track in the X-direction, i.e. at the limit of the area in which the manipulator 1 according to Herrmann operates, the roll stands would have to be transferred to Herrmann's manipulator 1, which performs the transport, positioning and orienting functions.

It should be appreciated that the system resulting from the proposed combination would be very different from the system according to the present claim 1. The proposed combination cannot be relied upon to show a "positioning device," for positioning and retrieving "supporting elements," that cooperates with an "orienting device" for transporting the positioning device and for changing the orientation of the positioning device. The proposed combination would not result in a positioning device that transports the supporting elements along the primary paths (i.e. in the X-direction) separated from the orienting device, and transported along the second path (i.e. in the Y-direction) while loaded onto the orienting device.

Further to the above, it is respectfully submitted that the device of Lehrieder et al. operates on an entirely different principle than that of Herrmann. Specifically, Lehrieder et al. shows a roll loaded onto a first transport car 16, which is then loaded

onto a second transport car 27. This is highly dissimilar and incompatible with the manipulator 1 of Herrmann. It is therefore not clear from the Final Action why the person having skill in the art would make such a substitution "to improve handling efficiency," as stated by the Examiner. Indeed, it would appear that the operability of these devices would be destroyed in order to produce such a combination. At any rate, such a combination would clearly go beyond the disclosures of these references.

Still further, it is noted that neither Herrmann nor Lehrieder et al. can be relied upon to show that a "positioning device is movable forward with one of the supporting elements on its front side, relative to a direction of travel, and is movable backward with one of the supporting elements on its back side, relative to the direction of travel," as is presently recited in amended claim 1. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner either cite the portions of these references relied upon to show these limitations, or else kindly withdraw these grounds of rejection.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the proposed combination cannot be relied upon to show the limitations of amended claim 1, particularly a positioning device "adapted for positioning and retrieving and of transporting the supporting elements along the primary transport paths separated from the at least one orienting device," where the positioning device "is adapted to be loaded to the at least one orienting device for orienting and transporting the supporting elements along the at least one secondary transport path."

Reconsideration and withdrawal of these grounds of rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

The dependent claims recite new and beneficial features of the invention in

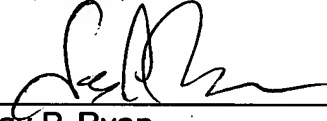
addition to those features recited in independent claim 1. However, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as independent claim 1. A favorable indication to that effect is earnestly solicited.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 18-0160, our Order No. FRR-12920.

Respectfully submitted,

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